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ABSTRACT

The Creative Teaching and Learning Cooperative (CTLC) of Tulsa Junior College's Southeast Campus is working to establish a new research protocol reflective of the community college's instructional mission in higher education. This protocol is more collaborative than the traditional university paradigm which rewards faculty for writing and publishing. Although college faculty and students do publish, many other methods are employed to share results of daily classroom field research, including a Faculty Research Center, electronic mail discussion groups, lunch discussion sessions, a computerized adjunct survey, computer workshops, and yearly off-campus retreats offering roundtable discussions on topics for teachers. The CTLC is organized through problem-solving task forces that identify concerns in the teaching and learning environment, and 90% of the Campus' faculty and administration have voluntarily participated. The CTLC research protocol involves four steps: genesis, where a person or group awakens to research possibilities; immersion, the study stage; formulation, or the development of all the hypotheses, conclusions, creations, lectures, presentations, strategies, solutions, plans, paradigms from the study; and regeneration, where information is communicated to colleagues to confirm and validate. Although the CTLC has only been in existence for about 2 years, it has grown rapidly through faculty dedication and fast and efficient campus communication through voice mail and electronic mail. (KP)

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Recreating a Campus Culture: New Energy Systems in Higher Education. The Creative Teaching and Learning Cooperative.

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Recreating a Campus Culture: New Energy Systems in Higher Education The Creative Teaching and Learning Cooperative

Southeast Campus Tulsa Junior College

by

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The Creative Teaching and Learning Cooperative (CTLC) of TJC's Southeast Campus is establishing a new research protocol, a creative process that is reflective of our community college's instructional mission in higher education. The idea that university faculty do research and community college faculty only teach is simplistic and incorrect. Just as universities are refocusing on their teaching missions, community colleges are realizing that they are research centers for teaching and learning because of the number and diversity of student-learners that attend classes. Professional development in a community college must be centered not only on discipline-related content but also on cultivating the great teacher within each instructor. This is important because we must awaken the great teacher within every student if he or she is to become the lifelong self-educating person necessary for success in the modern world. Together we must constantly remember ourselves as a community of truth seekers, and our college is the center around which this energy revolves. As teachers, we know that it is fear that often gives ignorance its power and that we constantly have to reaffirm our own professions of faith in what is often a chaotic and dangerous world. Thus, it is important for us to recognize and develop a research protocol suitable to the needs of a large, inclusive, community-based, teaching-centered institution of higher education.

This research protocol is more collaborative than the traditional university paradigm which rewards individuals primarily for writing and publishing. Although some of our faculty members and students do publish, we recognize that there are many other important ways to share the results of our daily field research in the classroom. Therefore, we have established a Faculty Research Center (the first in TJC's 25 year history), Email Discussion Groups, Lunch Discussion Sessions, a computerized Adjunct Survey, Computer Workshops, and yearly off-campus Retreats which are focused on roundtable discussions of topics for teachers, by teachers. The CTLC is organized through problem-solving task forces that identify and address concerns that arise concerning our teaching and learning environment. This ongoing day-to-day, face-to-face sharing of knowledge and wisdom helps us in the formulation of relevant teaching innovations,

critical thinking, applications, and interdisciplinary relationships that make the student experience more meaningful and efficient. The success of this cooperative enterprise depends, of course, on the faculty's willingness to participate, set aside egos, invest time, and exhibit generosity of spirit for the benefit of the whole academic community. Ninety percent of Southeast's faculty and administration have voluntarily become involved in this faculty-run adventure in academic responsibility.

The Classified Staff has adopted this peer-support strategy for its own purposes with SUCCESS (Staff Undertakes Creative Challenges Every Single Semester). They have sponsored well attended discussions on such topics as managing negativity in the workplace and presenting a professional presence. They realize that they also contribute importantly to the teaching and learning environment of this community.

The creative process or research protocol that we have identified in the CTLC involves four steps. The first is GENESIS wherein a person or group awakens to the possibilities with hunches, intuitions, questions, perceptions, and experiences. This is followed by IMMERSION, the study stage with its logical gathering and organization of information and data. Comprehension, analysis, and record-keeping are important in this stage. This is where it is essential for the CTLC to offer workshops, in computers for example. The Research Center is also very important in this step because it houses the latest computer technology for investigation.

The third step of FORMULATION can be understood in two parts. The first is the Incubating/Synthesizing stage which finally results in Illumination. All of the hypotheses, conclusions, creations, lectures, multimedia presentations, strategies, solutions, images, plans, paradigms and propositions that develop are included in this part of the process.

The final step of the protocol is called REGENERATION. This is the part our community college was lacking before the CTLC. We had no structure through which to share with our peers what we knew or what we thought we knew. REGENERATION involves focused communication with colleagues in order to verify, evaluate, assess, authenticate, confirm and validate: so that we may constantly re-create ourselves collectively and individually. As new questions arise, the process begins again. Communication takes many forms and is energized through our cooperative CTLC activities as well as the Task Forces that give the protocol its structure and leadership. (see attachment)

Although the Cooperative has only been in existence for a about two years, its process and progress have developed very rapidly because of the vision and dedication of our faculty, the support and participation or our administrators, and the possibility of fast and efficient campus communication through technologies such as voice mail and email. Together we have

created a more profound academic discussion, a stronger community of professionals and students who are willing to live the questions knowing that if you want to participate in this journey, you must be in the conversation. This energy is being created without any kind of state or federal mandate and without any kind of grant money. It grows purely from the integrity of our teaching-learning community.

In her book, STORYTELLERS, THE IMAGE OF THE TWO-YEAR COLLEGE IN AMERICAN FICTION AND IN WOMEN'S JOURNALS, (1994) Nancy LaPaglia explores the way community colleges have been perceived and portrayed by writers in literature. Her research shows that two-year college participants are rarely included in fiction or in mass media like television and movies. In the few instances she did find, the portrayals were not flattering, although this is slowly changing as more and more people actually have the experience. In contrast to the negative stereotypes fostered by people who have never attended a community college are the journal entries of women who describe the growth and empowerment they feel as a result of their community college educations. The education they describe can be understood through the Latin root, educare, which means to bring forth. The women write about how their educations have brought forth the practical, psychological and spiritual resources they need to lead more productive and successful lives.

As of 1993/94, there were 1,442 public and private two-year colleges in the United States enrolling over 5.56 million students during the 1993 fall semester (U.S. Department of Education). The community college is an American invention based on a belief that a representative, democratic form of government requires an educated populace. Educators come from all over the world to learn how to create a system like ours. It is time we realize that the old individualistic research format is not the only one to be respected in higher education. A new kind of academic energy is alive and growing here - a synergy that works within us each, among us all, and is communicated through many signifying systems.

This material was presented at the National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) Austin, Texas
May, 1995

and at

The League for Innovation, Leadership 2000 San Francisco, California July, 1995

Tulsa Junior College

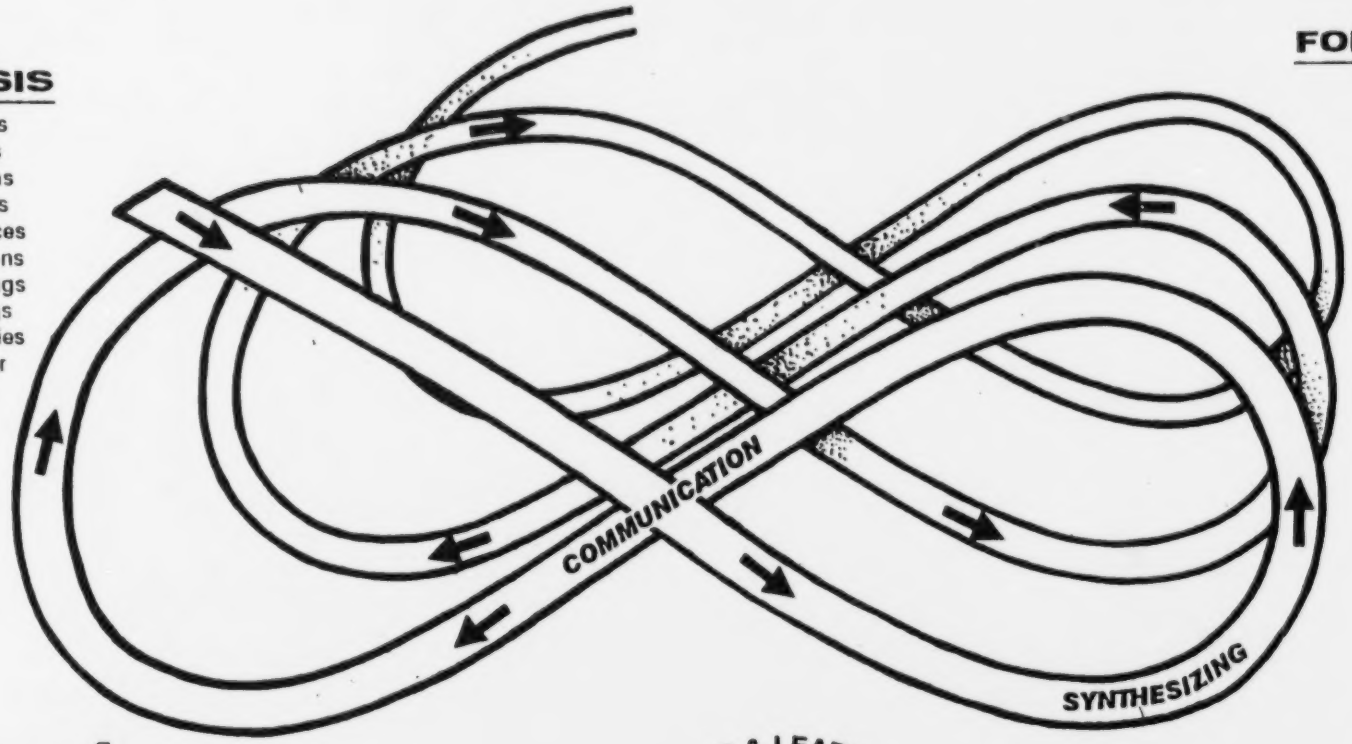
COMMUNITY COLLEGE FACULTY TRANSFORMATION:
A Creative Research Protocol

1. GENESIS

Intuitions
Insights
Questions
Hunches
Experiences
Perceptions
Awakenings
Sensings
Possibilities
Wonder

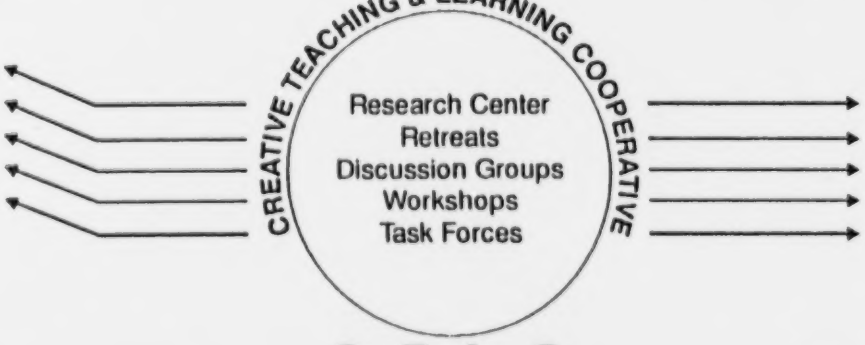
3. FORMULATION

Creations
Hypotheses
Plans
Designs
Models
Paradigms
Compositions
Illuminations
Inventions
Art



4. REGENERATION

Verification
Recreation
Reflection
Evaluation
Transformation



2. IMMERSION

Investigation
Information
Data
Comprehension
Study
Analysis
Applications

C. T. L. C.

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